

REPLY TO QUERIES -EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)- NO: TM/EOI/Q7/2026-T FOR PORT BASED PROJECT AT Q7 ON PPP / O&M MODEL

Sl. No.	Query	Details of Query	CoPA's response
	A. Berth & Infrastructure		
1.	What is the current operational status of Q7 berth, and what improvement works (dredging, fendering, mooring equipment) are planned and within what Time frame?	Clarity on berth readiness is critical for investment planning. The EOI mentions draft enhancement from 10.5m to 12.5m but does not specify timelines or responsibility for this capital expenditure.	Q7 berth is now operational with 10.5m draft and it is proposed to strengthen the berth and deepen the draft to 12.5 m. The construction work is expected to commence in July 2026 and expected to complete within 24 months.
2.	Will Cochin Port Authority permit the PPP/O&M operator at Q7 to handle domestic cargo including containerized cargo where the primary mode of onward distribution is not by road but through inland waterway movements backwater network), coastal shipping(short-sea coastal vessels), or rail (via the Plot-3 rail siding)? The intent is to position Q7 as a multimodal consolidation and distribution hub for domestic	Kerala generates significant domestic cargo volumes that currently move exclusively by berth, backup land, and rail siding makes it ideally placed to serve as a multimodal domestic cargo hub. Confirmation that CoPA supports inland waterway, coastal, and rail-based cargo movement through Q7 rather than restricting operations to road-fed import/export cargo is essential for the operator to build a commercially sustainable and socially beneficial logistics model aligned with India's National Logistics Policy and Sagarmala Objectives.	Domestic cargo operation is permitted except containers. However, Defence Cargo Vessels and container handling in Combi Vessels are permitted. Further, customer based captive cargo which are currently handled at CoPA are excluded from the PPP model.

	trade, including cargo originating from or destined to facilities such as Vizhinjam International Seaport and DP World Cochin, thereby diverting freight that would otherwise move entirely by road and reducing congestion on National Highways.		
3	Will inland waterway vessels (barges and small coastal vessels) be permitted to come alongside Q7 to load or unload cargo, including containers and break-bulk goods?	Inland vessel access would allow the operator to leverage Kerala's extensive backwater connectivity and integrate the berth into a broader intermodal logistics network, greatly enhancing throughput potential.	Inland waterway vessels (barges and small coastal vessels) be permitted to come alongside Q7 to load or unload cargo except containers.
4	What are the exact berth allocation / priority berthing terms for the PPP/O&M operator will a Service Level Agreement (SLA) be in place for turnaround time, and what penalties apply to CoPA for non-performance?	Priority berthing is mentioned but not defined. Investors need assurance of minimum berth availability to project revenues and meet Minimum Guaranteed Throughput (MGT) obligations.	Priority berthing shall be facilitated for the ships declared 7 days in advance and shall be subject to compliance of provisions in the Cochin Port and Dock Regulations, 2020. Performance Norms need to be complied or else penalty clause on mutually agreed terms will be inserted.
B. Rail Connectivity			
5	Is the existing rail siding at Plot-3 currently operational and connected to the mainline? How frequently is it used, and what is its	Plot-3's rail siding is a key differentiator for bulk cargo evacuation. If the line is disused or has capacity constraints, significant capital investment would be needed before it can be operationalized.	Rail line is operational. Rail siding belongs to the port whereas the rail line is railway property. PPP operator needs to liaise with railway for the operation. CoPA will extend the

	present handling capacity?		support to liaise with the Railways.
6	Who bears responsibility for maintenance, upgradation, and operational, costs of the rail siding CoPA, the PPP/O&M operator, or Indian Railways?,Is a separate Rail Use Agreement required with South Central Railway?	Operational and financial responsibility for rail infrastructure must be clearly delineated in the concession agreement to avoid disputes and to allow accurate financial modelling.	Rail line is operational. Rail siding belongs to the port whereas the rail line is railway property. PPP operator needs to liaise with CoPA and Railways for the maintenance.
C.Land & Concession Terms			
7	The operator respectfully but firmly proposes that the concession agreement must include a minimum 3-year moratorium period from the date of handover,during which no Minimum Guaranteed Throughput obligations or royalty payments shall apply. This is not merely a commercial preference it is a practical necessity. Q7 is currently an inactive berth with no established cargo base, no existing customer relationships, and no handling	Q7 has no active cargo traffic today. Attracting shipping lines to a new, unproven berth requires sustained business development, commercial negotiations, and service reliabilitynone of which can happen overnight. Infrastructure construction, equipment procurement, and commissioning alone will consume the first 12 to 18 months. The remaining period is required for market development and securing committed cargo volumes from shipping lines and cargo owners. A 3-year moratorium is not a concession it is the minimum reasonable timeframe for a responsible operator to build a sustainable business that will generate long-term revenue for both the operator and Cochin Port Authority. Major port concessions across India and internationally routinely include such provisions for greenfield or dormant	The request for moratorium on MGT shall be given.

<p>infrastructure in place. The operator will need to simultaneously undertake civil works and equipment installation, obtain statutory and environmental clearances, develop relationships with shipping lines, freight forwarders, and cargo owners, and build the commercial pipeline from the ground up. In the experience of similar greenfield port projects, three years is a conservative and realistic minimum for this foundation work. Imposing throughput obligations before any of this is in place would set the project up for failure from the outset and would ultimately be counterproductive for CoPA as well, since a financially stressed operator cannot invest in growth. We therefore request CoPA to confirm that a 3-year moratorium</p>	<p>berth developments.</p>	
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	will be a standard term of the concession agreement, and not subject to negotiation at a later stage.		
8	Will all three plots (Plot-1, Plot-2, and Plot-3) be offered as a single integrated seamless cargo flow from the berth through the storage yards (Plot-1 and Plot-2) and onward evacuation by rail (Plot-3). Splitting the plots into separate leases or concessions would create operational fragmentation, duplicate administrative costs, and introduce risk of one plot becoming unavailable while others remain in use. Please also confirm whether the land cost will be incorporated into the royalty-per-metric-tonne structure or charged separately as a lease rental.	Rationale: The three plots together form one integrated logistics chain: berth for vessel operations, Plot-1 and Plot-2 as storage and handling yards, and Plot-3 for rail-based cargo evacuation. A single unified concession is the only practical structure that allows the operator to plan, invest, and operate this chain efficiently. Fragmented land access would undermine the entire business case and make the project unbankable.	All three plots (Plot-1, Plot-2, and Plot-3) will be leased together to facilitate single integrated cargo flow from berth to the yard.
9	Will CoPA permit establishment of a private	An EPZ or FTWZ at Cochin Port would be a major competitive advantage, attracting value	CoPA has no objection for developing EPZ / FTWZ and shall be permitted

	Export Processing Zone (EPZ) or Free Trade Warehousing Zone (FTWZ) within the concession area, subject to applicable Government of India approvals?	added manufacturing, bonded warehousing, and international trade. This aligns with India's port-led industrialization agenda under Sagarmala.	subject to the clearance from the authority concerned.
D. Maritime Industry & Green Initiatives			
10	Will CoPA consider permitting the development of a small boat yard and marine fabrication facility within the concession area for the construction and maintenance of electric and hybrid vessels (boats, tugs, ferries) in alignment maritime policy and the National Green Hydrogen Mission? The operator does not require dedicated or continuous berth access for this activity berth access would only be needed on an occasional, pre-notified basis for heavy-lift vessel launch operations. Day-today boat yard activities,	India's maritime decarbonisation agenda and the Sagarmala programme specifically encourage indigenous development of green vessels. A small boat yard for electric and create skilled local employment, and position the port as a green maritime hub. Since berth access is only required occasionally for vessel launch and not as a permanent or exclusive arrangement this activity places no material burden on Q7 berth operations and should be straightforward for CoPA to accommodate within the concession terms.	The proposal is for clean cargo handling and shall not permit for boat yard/ marine fabrication facility.

	fabrication, and fitting-out work will be conducted entirely within the land concession area.		
11	Is CoPA open to the operator providing green port services such as shore power (cold ironing), electric bunker supply, and hydrogen fuel infrastructure for vessels calling at Q7 under a separate service concession?	Green port services would attract ESG-conscious shipping lines and cargo owners, increase vessel traffic, and support India's commitment under the IMO 2030/2050 decarbonization targets.	Shall be examined.
12	Will CoPA permit road-based bunkering operations through the Q7 berth, allowing the PPP/O&M operator or a licensed bunker supplier to deliver marine fuel (HFO, MGO, LSMGO, and future low-carbon fuels) to vessels berthed at Q7 via road tankers, with all necessary safety, metering, and spill containment provisions in place?	Road-tanker bunkering is a standard and commercially significant port service that directly licences, road access through the berth gate, tanker parking/marshalling area, and applicable port dues for bunker barges or road tankers is essential for the operator to plan a bundled cargo-handling-plus-bunkering business model at Q7.	Shall be permitted for vessels handled by the PPP operator subject to compliance of SOP/guidelines in force.
E. Financial & Regulatory			

13	<p>What is the indicative Minimum Guaranteed Throughput and the royalty per metric tonne range that CoPA expects after the moratorium period ends? The operator also seeks confirmation that it will have full and independent authority to set its own cargo handling tariffs at Q7 that is, the rates charged to cargo owners and shipping lines will be determined entirely by the operator based on market conditions, without requiring CoPA approval or being subject to a regulated tariff schedule. Competitive, market-driven pricing is essential for the operator to attract cargo and grow throughput, which in turn directly benefits CoPA through higher royalty income.</p>	<p>Without the freedom to price competitively, the operator cannot respond quickly to market changes or win cargo away from competing ports and logistics providers. Indicative MGT figures are also needed at this stage to assess whether the concession obligations are commercially achievable.</p>	<p>MGT shall be finalised in consultation with interested parties. Tariff shall be subject to approval of CoPA and the prevailing PPP tariff guidelines shall be applicable.</p>
14	<p>What is CoPA's policy on royalty payments and any escalation of the royalty rate over the concession period? The operator proposes that: (a) royalty payments to CoPA should fall due only after the close of each financial year, following independent audited accounts, so that the payment obligation is</p>	<p>Post-audit annual payment protects the operator from paying royalty on cargo that has not yet been fully invoiced or realised, and gives both parties a clean, verified basis for settlement. A fixed escalation formula eliminates the commercial uncertainty and relationship friction that comes with periodic renegotiation, making the</p>	<p>Payment shall be financial year basis.</p>

	<p>based on actual verified throughput and revenue rather than estimates; and(b) any increase in the royalty rate over time should follow a simple, pre agreed formula tied to a published national price index such as the All India Wholesale Price Index or the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers, so that both parties have full clarity and certainty from the outset and there is no need for periodic renegotiation.</p>	<p>concession easier to finance and manage over its full term.</p>	
15	<p>What environmental clearance status does the Q7 project currently hold, and will CoPA assist the PPP/O&M operator in obtaining statutory approvals including CRZ clearance, environmental impact assessment, and fire safety approvals?</p>	<p>Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) and environmental clearances are often time-consuming. CoPA's support in facilitating these approvals would materially reduce project development timelines.</p>	<p>The Q7 berth is an operational berth, and no further approvals are required for handling ships carrying the proposed clean cargo at the berth. No construction activities are envisaged at the berth. However NoC from the Naval Authority shall be required for the installation of any tall cranes on the berth. Any construction in the backup land area will require prior approval from Cochin Port Authority as well as from the Local Municipal Authority, Naval Authority, and other statutory bodies, as applicable. Environmental clearance shall be obtained by the respective operator based on the nature of the cargo proposed to be handled in the project area.</p>
16	<p>Will the PPP/O&M concession agreement be governed by the</p>	<p>Investors and financiers require robust dispute resolution</p>	<p>Provision for a dispute resolution mechanism in the form of arbitration shall</p>

	PGLM (Port Guidelines for Land Management) and the Major Port Authorities Act 2021 and will independent arbitration (domestic or international) be available for dispute resolution?	mechanisms. The applicable legal framework and arbitration options are critical for the bankability of the project.	be included in the contract, if the same is awarded under the PPP / O & M model and shall be as per the Model Concession Agreement. (MCA) (Attached)
17	Are there any restricted, prohibited, or conditionally permitted cargo types at Q7 or within the Cochin Port limits? Specifically, please confirm: (a) which commodities are outright prohibited at Q7; (b) which cargoes require special CoPA approval or additional licences (e.g., hazardous goods, chemicals, fertilisers, ammunition, livestock, or waste materials); and (c) whether there are any environmental or regulatory restrictions on specific cargo categories such as petcoke, coal, or other high-dust / high-pollution commodities.	The EOI mentions “clean cargo” and dust-free operations, implying certain cargo categories may already be restricted or discouraged at this berth. A clear and comprehensive list of prohibited and conditionally permitted cargoes is essential for the operator to design the right cargo mix, secure customer commitments, and avoid commercial and compliance risks after the concession is awarded.	The berth is earmarked for clean cargo handling and the operator can use the berth accordingly. Q7 is also an approved berth for IMO cargo handling. Other cargo will be subject to no objection from the port. Further, customer based captive cargo which are currently handled at CoPA are excluded from the PPP model.
18	What are the existing terms, agreements, and obligations between Cochin Port Authority and the recognised port labour unions (including CPDLB Cochin Port Dock Labour Board registered workers) that may affect operations at Q7? Specifically:	(a) Will the PPP/O&M operator be contractually bound by any existing Wage Board settlements, labour deployment norms, or minimum gang-size requirements negotiated between CoPA and port labour unions?	The Willingdon Island is a Kerala headload Workers Welfare Board Scheme Covered Area. However, the stevedoring operations (loading/unloading of cargo from/to ships) can be undertaken by the labours deployed by the PPP operator. Efforts are being taken to exclude the applicability the scheme from PPP Operator.
		(b) Will CoPA provide a clear	Agreed.

		<p>contractual guarantee in the concession agreement that the PPP/O&M operator's premises, workforce, and operations within the Q7 concession area will be treated as a separate and independent establishment, fully excluded from the jurisdiction of CoPA's recognized port labour unions, and that the operator shall have the freedom to hire, manage, and operate its own workforce under applicable national labour laws without interference or compulsory deployment obligations from existing port union arrangements?</p>	
19	<p>The operator is planning to establish a Regulation 4 (R4) compliant e-waste and battery recycling facility within a Free Trade and Warehousing Zone to be set up inside the port concession area, in one of the three plots identified in the EOI. R4 certification under the Basel Convention and the E-Waste Management Rules 2022 governs the responsible recycling and material recovery of end-of-life electronics and batteries, including lithium-ion battery packs from electric vehicles and industrial</p>	<p>India generates over 1.6 million metric tonnes of e-waste annually and is a significant importer of end-of-life batteries and electronic components for recycling. A port-based R4 recycling facility inside a Free Trade and Warehousing Zone would attract direct imports of recyclable material by sea, generate substantial cargo volume through Q7, create high value skilled employment, and contribute to the circular economy goals of the Government of India's National Resource Efficiency Policy. The</p>	<p>The proposal is for clean cargo handling and the backup area is also shall be for the associated operations. On receipt of separate proposal the other requirements shall be considered.</p>

	<p>equipment. Does Cochin Port Authority have any objection to the establishment of an R4-certified recycling facility of this nature within the port premises? Is there any port-level policy, environmental restriction, or regulatory requirement that the operator should be aware of before proceeding with this proposal? The operator is committed to ensuring that all operations will comply fully with the applicable rules under the Environment Protection Act, Hazardous and Other Wastes Management Rules, and all conditions stipulated by the State Pollution Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board.</p>	<p>port location is strategically ideal-recyclable materials arrive by sea and recovered secondary raw materials (copper,aluminium, cobalt, lithium) can be exported or moved onward by rail, eliminating road transport of hazardous cargo. This is a high-growth, future-oriented industry that aligns with both the Sagarmala programme and India's commitments under international environmental agreements.</p>	
20	<p>Will CoPA permit the PPP/O&M operator to have a dedicated section of the Q7 berth-approximately 80 to 100 metres out of the total 200-metre berth length-reserved at all times for the operator's own vessels? The operator's fleet will primarily consist of barges, tugboats, and smaller general cargo vessels used for transporting goods from Q7 to other berths and terminals within Cochin Port (including the</p>	<p>Barges and small general cargo vessels operate on flexible, demand-driven schedules and cannot always depart immediately after loading or unloading. Without a guaranteed berth space, the operator's own vessels would be displaced by incoming commercial ships, disrupting the cargo delivery cycle and making reliable end-to-end logistics impossible to offer to customers. A dedicated 80 to 100 metre section- roughly half the</p>	<p>Dedicated facility shall not be permitted as it is a common user berth. However the berthing shall be permitted subject to availability and payment of applicable VRC.</p>

<p>DP World container terminal) and for coastal cargo movements. Unlike large commercial vessels that berth, discharge, and depart, the operator's own barges and small craft will sometimes need to remain alongside for extended periods-waiting to load, consolidating cargo, or standing by between voyages. This makes a designated, reserved berthing space operationally essential rather than a luxury. The remaining 100 to 120 metres of the berth would continue to be available for third-party commercial vessel calls under the common user arrangement. Please confirm whether such a split-berth arrangement-with a clearly demarcated dedicated section for the operator's own fleet and a common user section for inbound cargo vessels-can be incorporated into the concession agreement, and what port charges, if any, would apply for the dedicated section during periods of vessel standby.</p>	<p>berth - is a modest and practical ask given that the operator will be investing in the entire berth infrastructure and driving cargo volume through the full 200 metres. This arrangement mirrors standard practice at multipurpose berths worldwide where an operator simultaneously handles inbound cargo and manages an outbound distribution fleet. It also increases the overall utilisation of Q7 by ensuring the berth is active and in productive use at all times, generating continuous port dues and wharfage revenue for Cochin Port Authority</p>	
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